

## CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

WHAT WILL I DO WITHOUT AUNT MARY?

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"Are you feeling any better, Margie?"

"Lot's," I answered laconically. Mollie had just invited me, over the phone, to go downtown to have luncheon with her and as I had not done anything of the kind since I was ill I made up my mind I would go.

Do you know, little book, I think if people made as great an effort to break the habit of illness as they do to break the habit of health there would be a harder race at the helm of human affairs.

This morning I awoke with the same old listless feeling, the same dread of the coming day. I thought "I don't believe I am able to do anything today," and then I began to take stock.

"You ate well yesterday?"

"Yes."

"You have no aches or pains this morning?"

"Then will you please state where you are ill."

"Oh, but I have gone through such a terrible illness—such terrible trouble."

"But you have gone through haven't you? IT'S OVER. Just remember that it's over. You are well today. Don't get into the habit of thinking you are sick any more for you are not. You are a lazy coward, Margie Waverly, and as Mollie right-up says you are selfish in the bargain. Get yourself together and begin to make yourself of some use to yourself and those about you.

"Aunt Mary needs you now with the sentence of death pronounced upon her with only a faint possibility of reprieve. See how brave she is."

My reason is right, little book, although a bit strenuous and unsympathetic, as it always is. So I started for the bathroom and for the first time since I was ill took a cool shower.

Goodness but it was cold and tingley but it set my blood dancing and strange as it might seem to some of the misanthropes and hypochondriacs, if they should read this, even my mind shed some of its hopelessness and my heart its heaviness.

I tiptoed into Aunt Mary's room. She was sleeping as sweetly as a child. The near approach of "the great adventure" had no terrors for her. Dick had been gone a long while.

Note—After this it is breakfast with Dick for me. I am no invalid.

Before I was dressed Aunt Mary awakened and I told her that I would stay with her if she wished.

"No, dear, I really don't want you here this morning. I have a lot of things I want to do before I go to the hospital."

"Then I'll stay and help you, dear Aunt Mary."

Some way, little book, the word dear has always seemed to me as much a part of her name as Aunt or Mary. After Dick, she has been the nearest and dearest one to me since my mother's death.

"No, Margie, they are things I want to do for myself and alone."

"All right, dear Aunt Mary, I'll be home soon after luncheon."

"I'm glad for you to do; I want you to be bright and happy again."

"I will only be happy when you are well."

Dear Aunt Mary looked up suddenly. "Listen, Margie, my child, for of all my nieces you have been most like my own child, I want you to remember what I am saying to you today—even if I do not get well, I want you to be happy. Margie, dear, don't let your happiness rest on anyone else. If you do he may fail you, not from choice, but as I shall fail you if I don't get well, because he can't help it. No one could have loved her,